

COMMUNITY-LED, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT



A GUIDE FOR FUNDERS

WRITTEN BY Amber Moulton, Salote Soqo, and Kevin Ferreira



UUSC AND THIS GUIDE

UUSC is a 77-year-old human rights agency located in Cambridge, Mass. We provide funding, advocacy, research, and other support to grassroots partners using an “eye-to-eye partnership model.” This guide emerged from a year of scoping research and many conversations with grassroots leaders, funders, and other stakeholders, which led to the formation of an Environmental Justice and Climate Action portfolio that focuses on climate-forced displacement. We will be hosting a first-of-its-kind convening of frontline community partners and stakeholders in 2018 to advance a collective strategy for advocacy and action.

While UUSC is at the beginning of our work on this issue, many of our partners have been planning, advocating, and adapting to extreme climate impacts for decades. Still, their efforts are chronically underfunded, and they struggle to have their say in decision-making forums, often being overshadowed by researchers and analysts from major international agencies. We urge more funders to engage directly on the issue of climate-forced displacement and to incorporate human rights-based approaches to amplify the voices, advocacy, and solutions of frontline communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change is advancing much more quickly and more strongly than scientific projections and placing people's rights at risk. Climate change affects all of us, but its consequences are not distributed equally. Climate impacts exacerbate existing inequities in society, whether they are related to poverty, gender, race or ethnicity, ability, or other factors. The slow-onset impacts of climate change are displacing communities and having severe impacts on human rights — the right to health, food security, water and sanitation, life, religious expression, and culture, among others.

Often, grassroots, frontline communities have the best and most appropriate solutions to these challenges. At the same time, these communities receive the smallest share of funding and are sidelined by state and international decision makers.

The philanthropic community ("funders" hereafter) can fill this void by supporting grassroots communities to advance human rights-based solutions to climate change and climate-forced displacement. Funders can fill gaps in international and state financing and shift the funding landscape from primarily reacting to climate disasters to *preventative community-led planning* for slow-onset climate change events.

This guide outlines key issues related to climate-forced displacement, human rights, and funding, and calls upon funders to support community-led, human rights-based solutions. It is not a comprehensive resource, but rather an introduction and framing along with guidance. At the end of the guide, we lay out concrete steps that funders can take to:

- Assess how climate-forced displacement relates to a current strategy or portfolio
- Effectively partner with grassroots communities working on issues along the climate-forced displacement spectrum
- Advance a human rights-based approach to climate-forced displacement
- Act as a bridge and network builder to amplify the voice and impact of grassroots communities

GLOSSARY

Adaptation

Taking deliberate actions to avoid, manage, or reduce the adverse consequences of climate change to limit harm or take advantage of benefits.

Adaptation Fund

Established under the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to finance projects and programs that help at-risk communities in developing countries adapt to climate change.

Conference of the Parties (COP)

The governing body of UNFCCC to advance implementation of the Convention through the decisions it takes at its periodic meetings.

Disaster Risk Reduction

A systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and reducing the risk of natural disasters.

Disaster Risk Management

Implementing disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risks, reduce existing disaster risks, and manage residual risks.

Displacement

The forced movement of people from their home or community, in the context of this report, because of climate change and disasters.

Funders

Used in this guide to indicate philanthropy, foundations, or other nongovernmental funders.

Green Climate Fund

A global funding mechanism created under UNFCCC to support developing countries in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The principal intergovernmental organization on migration that provides services and advice to governments, agencies, and organizations on migration policy, legislation, and management.

Internal Displacement

People who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes but remain in their country of origin, in particular because of disasters and climate change.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

An international body under the auspices of the United Nations for assessing the science related to climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

Loss and Damage

The negative effects of climate variability and climate change materializing in vulnerable countries after mitigation and adaptation efforts have been undertaken.

Mitigation

Actions taken to reduce the sources of greenhouse gases.

Nansen Initiative

Launched in 2012, a state-led, consultative process intended to identify effective practices and build consensus on key principles and elements to address the protection and assistance needs of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters.

Natural Disasters

Events caused by natural forces that usually result in damage or loss of life, such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcano eruptions.

Platform on Disaster Displacement

A government organization focused on following up on the work started by the Nansen Initiative and implementing the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, endorsed by 109 governmental delegations during a Global Consultation in October 2015.

Planned Relocation

The preplanned resettlement of people or communities to new areas to protect against climate impacts or disasters. UUSC maintains that these relocations must be led by the community, rather than top-down, state-led processes.

Slow-Onset Climate Event

Occurrences that progress and increase in impact over time, such as sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinization, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity, and desertification.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

An international treaty developed to address the problem of climate change.

INTRODUCTION

CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT

KEY CLIMATE EVENTS CONTRIBUTING TO DISPLACEMENT

Sea-level Rise
Rising Temperatures
Permafrost Melt
Glacier Melt
Drought
Flooding
Extreme Weather
Patterns

NEW INTERNAL DISPLACEMENTS IN 2016

NATURAL DISASTERS

24.2M

VIOLENCE & CONFLICT

6.9M

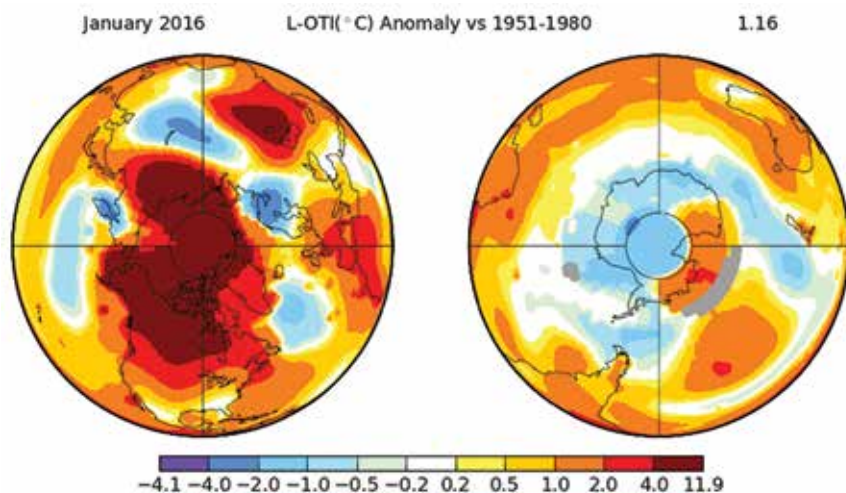
Data Source: IDMC, GRID 2017

Since 2008, an average of 25.3 million people per year have been displaced from their homes by disasters brought on by natural hazards, and that number is expected to rise.¹ The International Displacement Monitoring Center reports that 31.1 million people were newly displaced due to conflict, violence, or disasters in 2016 alone. This is the equivalent of one person per second.² A majority of these displacements — 24.2 million people — were because of natural disasters.³ A majority of the disaster-related displacements that occurred in 2016 occurred in low- and lower-middle income countries and disproportionately affect small island developing states.⁴ The projections for how many people will be displaced by climate change vary widely from 25 million to one billion people by 2050. The most widely cited estimate is 200 million people.⁵

These numbers, high as they are, do not include people that are displaced by slow-onset climate events. There are no statistics related to the number of people forced from their homes because of erosion or sea level rise, critical environmental hazards for coastal communities. It is difficult to quantify climate-forced displacement due to slow-onset events because it may take place over a long period of time and be a result of the complex and varied ways climate change combines with other factors to affect and exacerbate threats to people's livelihoods.

Communities are relocating or resettling right now because of the slow-onset impacts such as sea level rise coupled with repeated extreme weather events. This is not a future problem — it is a current problem. Individual households and entire communities have already relocated or are currently planning relocations across the globe, from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to Louisiana and Alaska.

High emissions, rising global temperatures, and rising seas are already taking their toll. In winter 2017, the temperature in the Arctic spiked by 40 degrees Fahrenheit three times. January 2016 registered the hottest winter on record, with extreme heat anomalies, particularly in the northern hemisphere and the Arctic. The following January registered as the third hottest on record. As Robin Bronen, of UUSC grantee partner ("partner" hereafter) Alaska Institute for Justice puts it, "I live in Anchorage, Alaska, and we don't know if we are going to get snow this winter."⁶



➤ **THIS MAP shows record heat anomalies in January 2016. On the left is a view of the North Pole and Arctic region, where temperatures were more than 10 degrees Fahrenheit above average.**

Image: NOAA⁷

We are in a climate crisis that is already having dire impacts. Recent studies suggest that if greenhouse gas emissions continue at current rates, Antarctic glacial melt could raise global sea levels three feet by 2100.⁸ U.S. climate agencies' current assessment projects that a 1.5 foot rise is very likely under current emissions scenarios, noting the possibility of an alarming worst-case scenario rise of, on average, eight feet by 2100.⁹ At the 2017 Conference of Parties in Bonn, Germany, climate scientists reported that the global temperature has risen 1.1 degrees Celsius, dangerously close to the 1.5-degree rise that will lead to irreversible damage.

The threat of climate-forced displacement is disproportionately acute in small developing states and indigenous communities in remote areas. These communities are often under-resourced and politically marginalized, and, in some cases, have histories that include dealing with environmental change, tribal conflict, and earlier displacement by colonialist or corporate land grabs. Communities are often carrying out resettlements or relocations without legal protections and inadequate funding from private or governmental sources. Above all, global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change must be guided by human rights norms and principles, including the rights to participation, self-determination, transparency, and nondiscrimination.

➤ Climate Refugee

We do not use the term "climate refugee" in this guide for three main reasons:

Most climate-displaced people are internally displaced.

Cross-border migrants currently enjoy no protection under refugee conventions.

Climate-displaced people themselves often insist that they are not refugees and believe the term carries negative and disempowering connotations.

CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

FUNDER PERSPECTIVE

SALOTE SOQO, UUSC Senior Program Leader for Environmental Justice and Climate Action

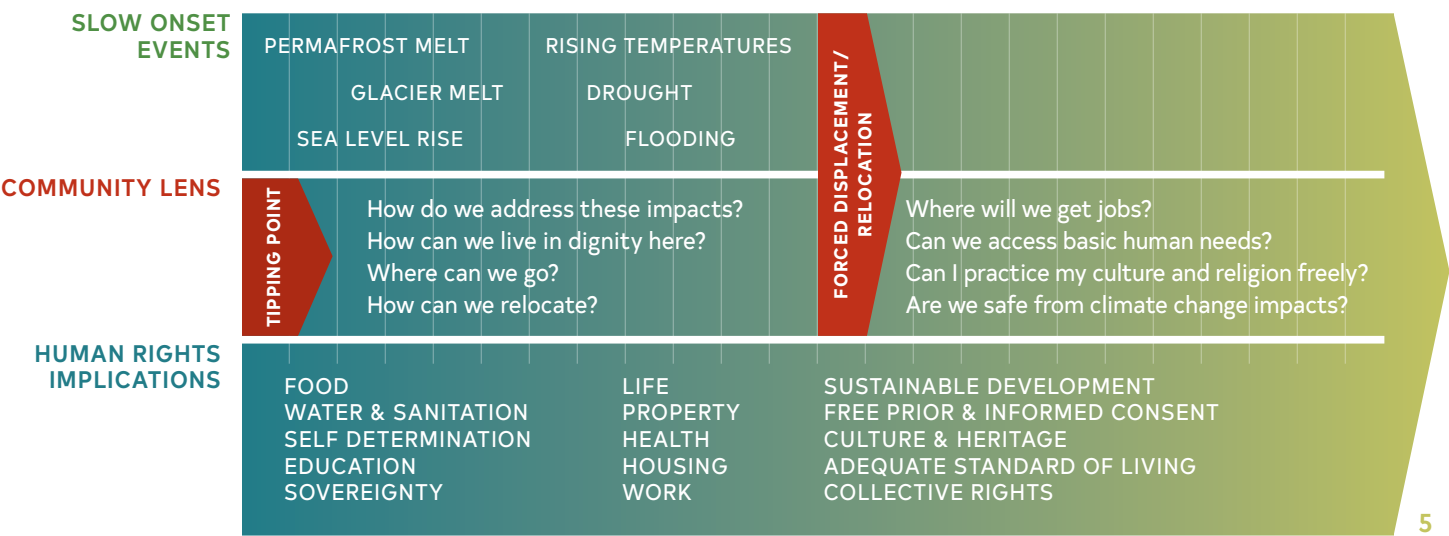
"UUSC is first and foremost a human rights defender, and we are called to speak out against the injustice of climate-forced displacement and to actively advocate for the rights of affected communities in the spaces we're in, including philanthropy. Our goal through this guide is to share this baton and responsibility with our peers."

A SPECTRUM OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS RAISED BY CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT

There is currently no comprehensive legal framework — at the international, regional, or state levels — for protecting the rights and facilitating the movement of climate-displaced people.¹⁰ Individuals and communities who are acutely affected by slow-onset climate impacts face a myriad of threats to their human rights. Yet, the international community does not currently recognize rights tailored to the specific needs of people who are or may be displaced by these impacts.¹¹ Climate-displaced people, even when they must migrate beyond their borders, are not currently recognized as refugees. The first claims of people who have attempted to gain refugee status because of climate change — made by people from Kiribati and Tuvalu who have migrated to New Zealand — have all been rejected.¹²

One way to fill this void is to view climate-forced displacement through the lens of human rights. There is a wide spectrum of community and human rights concerns raised by the threat of climate-forced displacement. These may be separated into three situations to help with clarity, but it is important to remember that these situations can be fluid and overlap:

- Communities or families that **have already relocated** due to climate change impacts
- Communities **planning relocations** due to climate change impacts



UUSC PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

DAVID BOSETO, Ecological Solutions, Solomon Islands

"Climate change displacement is real and we are experiencing it on our small island nation of the Solomon Islands where people have lost their home villages due to rising sea water and the strong forces of high tides that damage coastal villages... Each community is assessing their greatest needs and funders should fully support them and facilitate their planning."

- Communities **at risk of climate-forced displacement** that are actively engaging in adaptation, risk management, monitoring, and resilience activities to avoid catastrophic climate change impacts

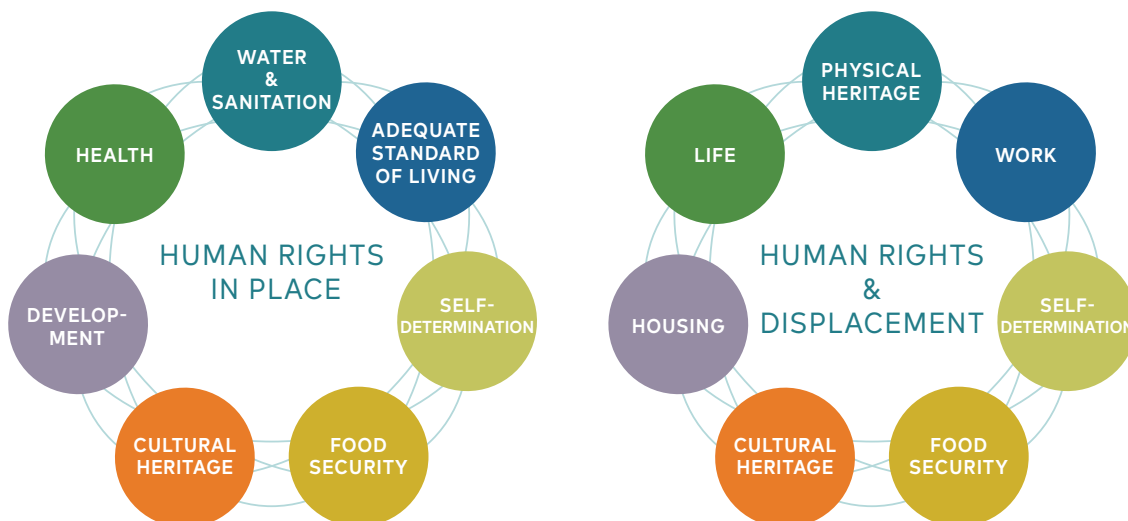
The spectrum we have developed, pictured on the previous page, outlines many of the key concerns for these communities, from the tipping point at which communities decide they must consider radical adaptation measures through migration or relocation.

Well before a relocation or a catastrophic event, communities face threats to their human rights.¹³ When sea level rise leads to salt water intrusion of groundwater aquifers on low-lying atolls such as Kiribati in the Pacific, peoples' human rights to water and food are threatened. When increasing temperatures accelerate permafrost thawing and erosion in communities such as Kivalina in Alaska, and homes and infrastructure fall into the sea, peoples' rights to adequate housing and property are threatened. In such situations, overcrowding and inadequate resources can lead to additional challenges such as poor sanitation and hygiene.

THE RIGHT TO REMAIN

While we recognize the rights of individuals and communities to relocate if they choose, funders must understand that above all, most people wish to remain in their homes. At this stage, communities may be assessing how to protect their rights and live in dignity where they are. There can be unintended consequences to relocating. Indigenous communities in the United States have found that making a public announcement about their desire to relocate has led to state funds and public works money disappearing. Funders should support communities at risk from climate impacts to undergo discernment processes and to remain in place whenever possible. Support may take the form of products — water or sanitation infrastructure, adaptive infrastructure, or housing — or processes, such as climate change monitoring, community discernment, or advocacy.

KEY HUMAN RIGHTS AT RISK: IN PLACE AND WHEN RELOCATING/RESETTLING





DAVID BOSETO AND A COMMUNITY MEMBER, MURIKI JUNIOR, IN KANATA VILLAGE IN CHOISEUL PROVINCE

Photo: UUSC/Soqo

SPOTLIGHT

UUSC partner David Boseto of Ecological Solutions works in the Solomon Islands, where climate impacts such as sea level rise and saltwater intrusion have already displaced communities who struggle to protect their rights and who have had to relocate with no government or other support. Ecological Solutions is leveraging its small funds to work with community members who have relocated from Nuatabu Island and Nusa Hope Village to build new homes and to advocate for resources from the government and other stakeholders. On Wagina Island, where people face fresh water scarcity, Ecological Solutions is also working to help community members access water tanks for freshwater storage.

DISPLACEMENT OR PLANNED RELOCATION

The Mary Robinson Foundation notes that because of the current lack of a legal framework protecting the rights of those displaced by climate change, glaring gaps exist in rights protections for displaced people, especially the rights to life, self-determination, access to food, housing, and quality standard of living, work, and cultural and physical heritage.¹⁴ Funders can support community organizations working to uphold these basic human rights and provide resources for advocacy, risk management, and community-led relocation planning when appropriate.

Communities reach a tipping point when adaptation in place is no longer a viable response to climate impacts. Even when relocation is planned as a strategy for avoiding displacement during a catastrophic event, it is critical that it be planned with the full participation and leadership of community members.

► **The right to self-determination must be at the core of relocation planning.**

Communities planning relocations must monitor climate impacts; assess options for acquiring new land; determine when, how, and where they may move; negotiate with landholders and governments; develop programs to ensure that community members can practice sustainable livelihood practices or have adequate standards of living; and consider means of cultural rejuvenation, among many other complex factors. Funders can support community organizations throughout this process, from providing resources to acquire land, homes, and other concrete goods, to funding



Photo: UUSC/Moulton

WOMEN LEADERS IN TINPUTZ DISCUSSING THE IMPACTS OF RELOCATING FROM THE CARTERET ISLANDS
MARIA SALEI, MARIA KAMIN, KOLITA KASUANA, BRIDGET TSIVI, MARGARET MAEKA, AND BENEDICTA OGI

SPOTLIGHT

UUSC partner Ursula Rakova of Tulele Peisa Inc. plans and carries out community-led relocation for Carteret Islanders in Papua New Guinea whose homes have been threatened by rising seas. Tulele Peisa has resettled eight families at a new home site in Tinputz, Bougainville, and is planning additional sites for other families, along with carrying out national and international advocacy for the rights of climate-displaced people. UUSC provides support to Tulele Peisa to organize youth and elder speaking tours and to engage Papua New Guineans and Bougainvilleans in lobbying to protect the rights of climate-displaced peoples. The organization supports youth and community members as they share their cultural practices, advocate for their rights, and forge connections and relationships in their new community in Bougainville.

community-led planning processes and helping to foster relationships between politically marginalized communities and key stakeholders and governmental agencies.

THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Frontline communities should lead climate-induced migration, resettlement, or relocation processes, with the support and cooperation of state and other relevant governing bodies. When communities are not at the helm — and they currently are not — human rights such as self-determination and indigenous peoples' cultural and collective rights are at risk. The history of displacement and forced relocations due to colonialism, infrastructure development, energy, and other state and private-sector-based projects makes it quite clear that forced displacement has devastating effects on human rights.¹⁵

Because community organizations are not resourced to carry out relocation planning or advocacy, individuals and families often migrate on their own and at the mercy of neoliberal values that reduce them to their value as laborers. The World Bank recently issued a report calling climate-induced "mobility" a "10 billion dollar prize" for the regional economy.¹⁶ Voluntary migration plans that rely on visa arrangements like those between some Pacific Island countries and Australia and New Zealand may even be exploited by countries seeking low-wage workers.¹⁷ Communities, not nations or development banks, need to be at the center of planning to protect individuals' full spectrum of human rights and communities' collective rights.

SPOTLIGHT

Photo: UUSC/Soqo



RICHARD TULUK,
MAYOR OF CHEVAK, ALASKA

U.N. DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Many of the communities who currently face the threat of climate-forced displacement are indigenous peoples. Climate-forced displacement directly threatens some of the key rights recognized by the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It challenges indigenous communities' rights to self-determination ("the freely expressed will of peoples") as climate change threatens to force people from their homelands — lands that are connected to traditions, culture, and livelihood. Indigenous communities' collective rights must be acknowledged and protected in the face of climate change. This means that climate relocation or migration planning that is predicated on individual or family-level concepts of land ownership may not suit the needs of indigenous communities or regions where land is held in common. Further, UNDRIP recognizes that the right to maintain indigenous culture is linked to the rights to land and resources. When people are forced from their lands (or seas), they risk losing traditional cultural practices along with their heritage sites.¹⁸

INTERSECTING RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Particular communities and specific community members who experience intersecting identities or forms of oppressions may be at greater risk of climate-forced displacement than others. As recent funder guides from Global Greengrants Fund and MADRE point out, climate justice and gender justice are deeply intertwined. Women and children face particular risks during disaster events because of gendered expectations and a lack of mobility.¹⁹ As Disability Rights Fund notes, people living with disabilities often struggle for meaningful inclusion in disaster planning processes and may face overt discrimination exacerbated by climate change. International human rights instruments may recognize the rights of a particular group, as the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities does, but these rights may or may not be recognized based on whether a nation has ratified the treaties, their capacity to implement them, how these rights need to be protected during a relocation process, or whether communities' own cultural contexts allow them to comply. Funders can intervene by supporting grassroots organizations led by and for women, children, indigenous people, and people with disabilities.

FUNDER PERSPECTIVES

HEATHER McGRAY, Director of the Climate Justice Resilience Fund

"The Climate Justice Resilience Fund takes an explicitly rights-based approach, and we focus on work related to women, youth, and indigenous communities. We focus on these core constituencies because they are uniquely vulnerable and uniquely capable of making change, because they are on the front lines of climate justice."

SPOTLIGHT

UUSC partner Tekamangu Tu'une of Te Toa Matoa leads the nation of Kiribati's primary disability rights advocacy organization. While Kiribati has long been at the forefront of climate displacement discussions because of its nature as a low-lying atoll vulnerable to the effects of rising seas, the nation's disaster risk management plans are incomplete. They do not address the needs of people living with disabilities. Te Toa Matoa uses a multifaceted approach to change this, from lobbying government officials for greater attention to the rights of people with disabilities, to hosting radio dramas that raise awareness among community members.



SALOTE SOGO FROM UUSC WITH TEKA TU'UNE, TERUBEIMO A NABETARI, AND TEUAI TAINIMAKI OF TE TOA MATOA IN SOUTH TAWARA, KIRIBATI

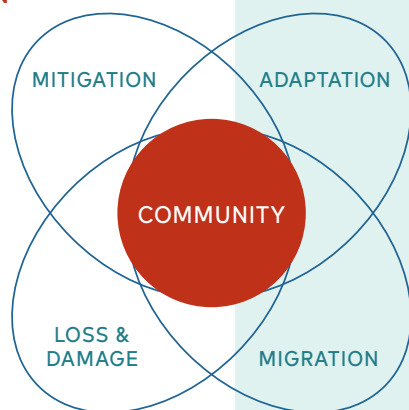
Photo: UUSC/Moulton

FUNDER PERSPECTIVE

**HILDA VEGA, Director of the
Grassroots Climate Solutions Fund**

"We focus on putting people at the center of our work — giving them priority when it comes to determining which strategies they need to deploy and what a successful outcome looks like. We know that the best solutions are very much in their hands."

NO MITIGATION VERSUS ADAPTATION FOR FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES



Center Community Organizations, Perspectives, and Beliefs

- There is a lot of debate and political wrangling about the merits of funding mitigation versus funding adaptation or resilience, and substantial debate about whether migration is an adaptation strategy or a sign of loss and damage. These are all meaningful debates, but a funder may find that communities experience and work on all of these at once — and may not prioritize solutions to one aspect or approach over another. Mitigation, adaptation, and loss — including migration and relocation — coexist for regions where climate change impacts are acute. **Let frontline communities shape your strategic thinking on how best to respond.**
- Some communities that are recognized in global forums as at risk of climate-forced displacement may have ways of understanding climate change that are different from the funder's. For instance, indigenous communities in the Arctic maintain traditional knowledge and understandings of their lands and seas that may differ from the understandings of climate change scientists who are not indigenous peoples.²⁰
- In some regions of the world, there is no phrase for "human rights" and concepts of human rights may not be widely shared or used. In these instances, funders should be open to understanding and using community members' own terminology and culturally appropriate concepts. This may include collective rights, traditional decision making, tribal leadership structures, or terms for dignity or well-being rather than rights language.

PHILANTHROPY CAN FILL A VOID RESOURCING COMMUNITIES DIRECTLY

UUSC PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

KRISTINA PETERSON, Facilitator,
Lowlander Center, Louisiana, USA

"In Isle de Jean Charles, we have discussed how it could be even better if we could work through in-kind donations and other [nongovernmental] grants... If you go away from the colonialist types of funding sources, you could advance strategies that are managed and envisioned by the community."

LAND LOSS IN SOUTHERN LOUISIANA

Communities facing acute threats from climate change need funding and advocacy that reaches not just the federal, state, or even local governmental levels — they need funding that goes directly to community organizations. At least at this time, funders and donors are much better positioned to provide this sort of direct support than intergovernmental organizations. This does not preclude the responsibility of the state and developed countries, in particular those who have benefitted the most from carbon-producing industries, to compensate affected countries and communities from the loss and damages that they are experiencing. Yet, little funding is currently dedicated to community approaches to climate-forced displacement.

RESOURCE AND ADVOCATE FOR FRONTLINE LEADERSHIP

Decisions about disaster and climate-forced displacement are being made — right now — without adequate and meaningful participation from grassroots and frontline community members. Since 2011, for example, George Washington University and the Brookings Institution have led major academic institutions and international agencies in creating guiding principles and even a checklist of considerations for states on the issue of "planned



Image: NOAA

UUSC PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

ROBIN BRONEN, Executive Director, Alaska Institute for Justice, Alaska, USA

"The primary focus is still on mitigation. This is true for national governments and true for communities. That is urgent — yes. But the reality is also that right now there is an urgent need for radical adaptation to happen. And not enough money is going toward adaptation."

SPOTLIGHT

UUSC partner Robin Bronen, of the Alaska Institute for Justice (AIJ) supports community-led planning in 15 communities in Alaska. Cup'ik residents of Chevak, Ala., describe how they were once able to travel across permafrost-laden marshland to access the surrounding volcanic mountains during winter to pick berries, but because permafrost melts earlier and faster than before, those trips are now becoming impossible. Others tell of fewer fish stocks, increasing floodwaters during storms, and frequent warm weather periods. AIJ's work with Chevak focuses on implementing community-based monitoring, which is coordinated with state and federal government agencies that can provide information regarding rates of erosion and resources to respond to and protect the community. Monitoring environmental change is a critical process to determine whether, when, and how relocation should occur. Chevak residents carry with them a deep knowledge of the ways the environment is changing and do their own erosion monitoring to plan for the future.

relocation."²¹ While frontline community members have been asked for advice during this process, none has held a leading role. Likewise, the Platform for Disaster Displacement held its advisory board meeting in fall 2017 and only a handful of affected community members were present.

However well-meaning, toolkits that are created without the participation of frontline experts and held and administered by the state run the risk of repeating the horrific consequences of government-mandated relocations, further silencing and potentially harming affected communities, and siphoning funds that should go directly to community solutions. We contend that a true human rights-based approach that fully accounts for self-determination requires that *communities who are most affected lead the planning processes*. This means that:

- Frontline communities should be resourced to do their own disaster risk assessment, monitoring, discernment, adaptation, relocation planning, and cultural invigoration.
- Frontline communities should be the primary recipients of funds intended to support planned relocation.

RESIDENTS OF CHEVAK, ALASKA, CARRY OUT COMMUNITY-BASED EROSION MONITORING TRAINING

Photo: UUSC/Soqo



FILL A VOID IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCING

One of the key weaknesses of existing international funds like the Green Climate Fund or the Adaptation Fund is that none of these funds is designed to distribute money directly to frontline communities.

Communities addressing adaptation, disaster risk management, or other work on the climate-forced displacement spectrum are disadvantaged for a host of reasons:

- Trends in financing favor climate change mitigation over other approaches.
- No reliable mechanisms exist for community organizations to access funds directly.
- Indigenous communities often face additional hurdles accessing funds from national governments — and it is even more difficult for unrecognized tribes.

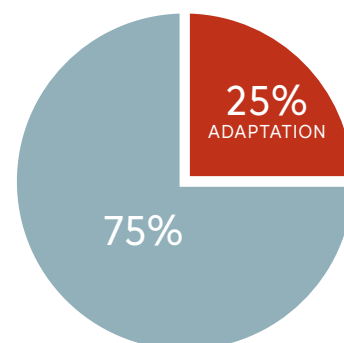
UNFCCC's most recent report notes that in 2014, global totals for international climate finance were at \$741 billion. Yet, 70% of financing went to mitigation and only 25% to adaptation — the area that would generally include work along the climate-forced displacement spectrum.²² A larger portion of bilateral development grants went to adaptation, at almost 60%.²³

For many communities facing threats of climate-forced displacement, adaptation has failed and they are facing **"loss and damage"** — in theory, an international mechanism whereby states would be compensated or otherwise financed for the loss of land, infrastructure, homes, livelihoods, and even cultural heritage. Unfortunately, at the 2017 Conference of Parties, the UNFCCC parties made little headway on this issue, failing to advance any practical mechanisms for implementing financing or concerted action on loss and damage. There is no progress in sight on loss and damage, and funders should step into this breach to support communities directly.

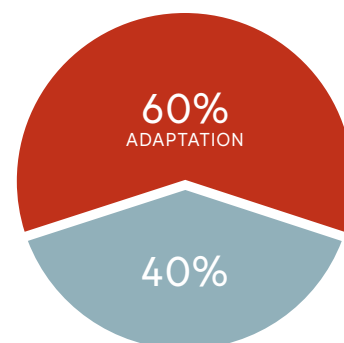
Climate financing is not accessible by communities or grassroots groups — funding goes to states for use and distribution.²⁴ Grassroots organizations hope that the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund may eventually develop ways to channel funds to communities through nongovernmental organizations or better direct funds to indigenous communities. Indigenous rights advocates like Tebtebba currently advocate for reform in the Green Climate Fund assessment process to make it more responsive to the needs of frontline communities.²⁵ Funders can support communities directly and use their influence to advocate for climate financing to community organizations.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

INTERNATIONAL FINANCING FOR ADAPTATION



BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR ADAPTATION



Data Source: UNFCCC

FUND COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO SLOW-ONSET EVENTS

One step in addressing climate-forced displacement through a human rights lens is shifting a focus on solutions away from reacting to climate disasters and toward community responses to slow-onset events. While many foundations and funding bodies are aware of the threats that climate change, natural disasters, and displacement pose to communities and their human rights, relatively little funding is currently dedicated to long-term solutions:

FUNDER PERSPECTIVE

URSULA MINISZEWSKI,
Global Greengrants Fund

"The impacts of climate change aren't equitable, so the response has to be social justice oriented... grassroots partners are not necessarily going to state how they face climate displacement explicitly, but the implicit message is that at-risk communities are facing the impacts of climate change in a disproportionate way and the response has to match that impact."

- Foundation Center reports that as of 2014, 73.1% of foundation funds for disasters and 68.3% of bilateral and multilateral funding went to reconstruction and recovery.
- Only 8.8% of foundation and 5.5% of multilateral funds went to resilience, risk reduction, and mitigation.²⁶

Foundations and bilateral and multilateral donors are major funders in responding to natural and man-made disasters such as droughts, typhoons, and flooding. There is opportunity to increase support for risk reduction and adaptation strategies that address slow-onset climate impacts. Funders should consider responses to slow-onset events a long-term commitment and provide long-term flexible funding directly to community organizations.

BE EXPLICIT IN FUNDING HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES TO CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Our recent review of human rights funding data held by the Foundation Center and the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) — which documents almost 215,000 grants from more than 13,000 funders since 2009 — shows that only a tiny fraction of human rights funds goes to projects specifically mentioning climate or environmental migration or displacement:

- A scant 20 of the 215,000 grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$94,000, were targeted specifically to climate migration or displacement.

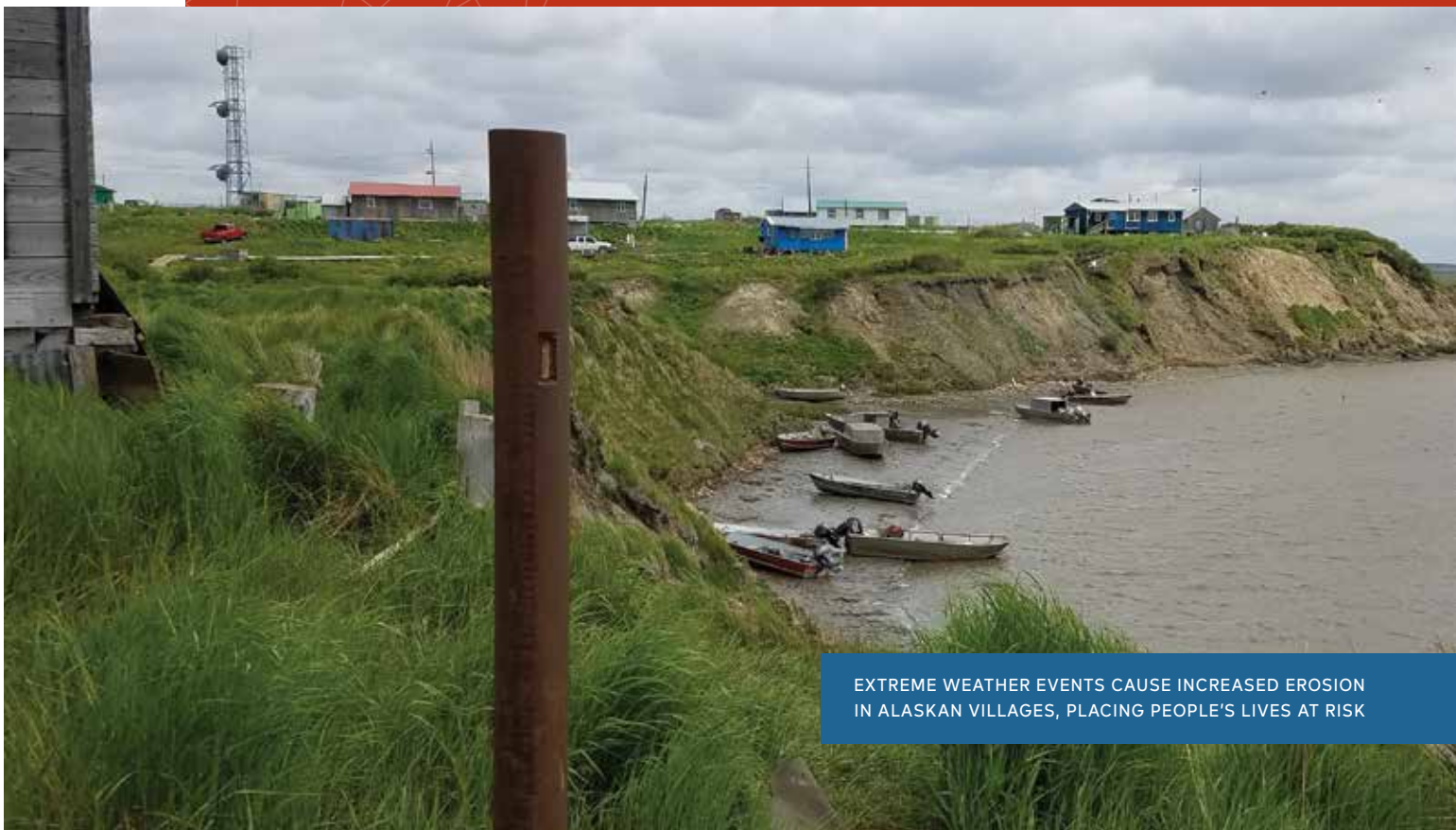
Notably, a more significant portion of grants — 164, totaling almost \$6 million — addressed displacement in an environmental and resource rights context, such as communities displaced by extractive industries and hydroelectric projects. There are undoubtedly more grants going to communities that face climate-related displacement that simply do not use the language of climate or environmental migration or displacement — nor would we want to force that language upon them. HRFN reports

that in 2014, 5% of foundations' human rights funding was allocated more broadly to migration and displacement and 9% to environmental and resource rights, totaling approximately \$383 million that year. But the lack of explicit attention to climate or environmental displacement or migration is still striking. Our holistic review of grantmaking data and information from funders and partners facing these issues makes it clear that funding for community-led, rights-based solutions to climate-forced displacement is minimal and insufficient.

SPOTLIGHT

FIRST PEOPLE'S CONVENING ON CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT

In September 2018, UUSC will host the First People's Convening on Climate-Forced Displacement. The purpose of this event is to establish a coalition of indigenous leaders from around the world, spanning the Pacific Islands to coastal Alaska, who are at imminent risk of being forcibly displaced from their homes and lands by the effects of climate change. The convening deliberately centers and foregrounds communities most affected by climate change, and the results of the convening will include, amongst other things, an advocacy strategy for advancing communities' priorities and plans to preserve their rights and dignity before, during, and after the occurrence of climate-forced displacement.



EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS CAUSE INCREASED EROSION IN ALASKAN VILLAGES, PLACING PEOPLE'S LIVES AT RISK



PACIFIC CLIMATE WARRIORS
CONVENING IN FIJI IN SEPTEMBER 2017

Photo: UUSC/Puamau



Photo: UUSC/Moulton

SPOTLIGHT

UUSC partner Fenton Lutunatabua and the Pacific Climate Warriors unite youth organizers and grassroots leaders from 15 Pacific Island countries to advocate for climate justice. The Warriors brought their message — stop fossil fuel use and financial support for radical adaptation and loss and damage — to the COP 23 U.N. climate change conference in November 2017. Their #haveyoursei campaign positions Pacific people as leaders on climate issues, raises awareness, and inspires solidarity for Pacific people facing climate change threats.

CONCLUSION

IN SUM

- Climate change impacts are infringing on the rights of frontline communities, and therefore these communities should hold the right to inform the discussion around these challenges and the solutions.
- Existing international climate financing does not reach communities.
- Currently, very little philanthropic funding supports direct responses to climate-forced displacement.
- Flexible philanthropic funds give communities the freedom to implement community-led and rights-based solutions that have a broad impact on their livelihoods and that uphold their rights.

FUNDER INTERSECTIONS WITH CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT



The small portion of funding currently going to community-led responses that specifically address climate-forced displacement should be understood as an invitation to have greater impact on rights-based solutions. It is an opportunity for funders who work on intersecting issues — such as climate change mitigation and resilience, water and sanitation, indigenous peoples' rights, disaster response and risk reduction, food security, women's movements, and others — to have a significant impact on the global response to climate-forced displacement.

There is an opportunity for funders to maximize their impact by contributing resources, networking, advocacy, and other support to frontline communities and to help to bring community leaders to the decision-making table. Funders should use their recognition and familiarity with financing processes and international bodies to further advance community-led responses. This is an opportunity for funders to shape ground-up, human rights-based solutions to bring greater equity to our global response to climate change.

NEXT STEPS TO ADVANCE COMMUNITY-LED, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES TO CLIMATE-FORCED DISPLACEMENT



1 ASSESS YOUR CURRENT PORTFOLIO:

- Do you fund in geographic areas where communities are at risk of climate displacement?
- Does your portfolio include issues that intersect with climate displacement?
- Do you fund responses to disasters such as flooding, drought, or extreme weather events? If so, do you also fund disaster risk reduction or resilience?
- Do you currently support communities addressing climate displacement? Are they grassroots organizations or frontline communities?

2 PARTNER WITH GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES:

- Whenever possible, fund grassroots community organizations directly.
- If you cannot partner with grassroots communities, identify an intermediary organization or network with a human rights approach.
- Is your funding restricted or project specific? Could it be more flexible?
- Talk with partners about how they think you could strategically place yourselves as the designated implementing agency to access international funds such as the Green Climate Fund.

Photo: UUSC/Moulton





3 ADVANCE A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH:

- Advance projects and organizations that address human rights issues in the context of climate-forced displacement or vice versa.
- Support community-based research and monitoring, and community-led adaptation and relocation projects.
- Support processes that are stakeholder led, not just consultative.
- Support processes that are led by rights holders and, whenever possible, led by women, tribal leaders, or people with disabilities.

4 ADVOCATE AND ACT AS A BRIDGE FOR GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS:

- Play a supportive role in creating spaces for exchange and collaboration by bringing affected individuals and communities together with other communities, governments, and decision-making bodies to amplify rights-holder positions.
- If you support issues along the climate-forced displacement spectrum, talk with partners about how you could support them to integrate into their work education, advocacy, or planning related to climate change.
- Work with other funders and grassroots leaders to influence international agencies' policies and recommendations.
- Form funder collaboratives or networks to distribute funds and amplify partners' work and influence.

KEY RESOURCES

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MISSION

UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.

VISION

UUSC envisions a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights.



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